

*Occasional and private instruction an important part
of the pastoral duty.*

THE
PRIMARY CHARGE

OF

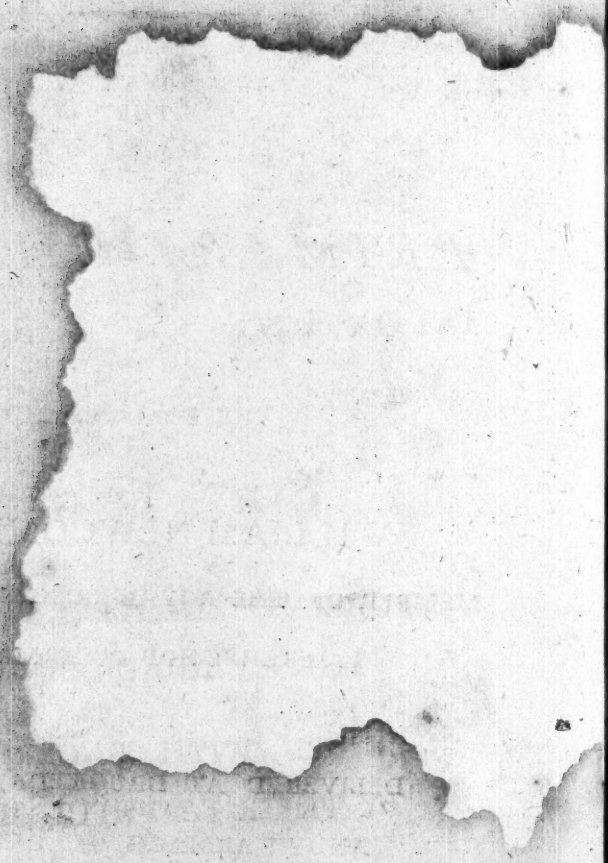
WILLIAM NEWCOME D. D.
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY, AND
ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH.

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1795.



TO THE
C L E R G Y
OF THE
DIOCESE OF ARMAGH
THE FOLLOWING
C H A R G E,

PUBLISHED IN DEFERENCE TO
THEIR CANDID OPINION,
IS INSCRIBED, WITH SINCERE REGARD,
BY THEIR FAITHFUL SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

THE
DIOCESE OF
THE
OF H.A.B.
PUBLISHED BY THE
BY THE
THE

THE
PRIMARY CHARGE, &c.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE leading reflection of my mind,
on occasion of this first address to you,
is gratitude to the Great Arbiter of all
events for raising me, however unworthy,
to the station which I now occupy. I
shall seriously endeavour to express the
truest thankfulness in the best manner;
by disposing myself to be a willing,
B though

though humble, instrument in his hands for advancing the cause of religion.

My gratitude to the King will best appear by inculcating loyalty to his person ; and attachment to that wise and admirable system of civil polity of which his Majesty has uniformly shewn himself the faithful Guardian and Protector. The duty of loyalty, and of subjection to all legal authority, is incumbent on all classes of men at all times ; but it was never more requisite to urge it on the conscience than in the foreign and domestic circumstances of political society which now exist : and I must add that the Clergy are peculiarly obliged to teach and to discharge it, because their proper studies cannot but impress on them how earnestly obedience to supreme and subordinate magistracy is enforced in the sacred writings.

Another

Another natural suggestion of my mind on this occasion, is paying a just tribute of respect and honour to the character of my venerable Predecessor; whose memory in this diocese, and in this kingdom, is immortalized by his zeal for the public prosperity, by his attention to the * means of clerical residence, by his piety in promoting the † erection of places dedicated to the worship of God, by his wise liberality in raising and endowing ‡ structures subservient

* During his incumbency, twenty two glebes were procured for the Clergy of the diocese of Armagh; and the See House and twenty nine Glebe Houses were built.

† He built twenty one new Churches in the diocese of Armagh; and a Chapel near Armagh House. He finished four of the Churches with Spires, Towers, &c. at the expence of 1200l. each. He expended 2500l. on his Cathedral.

‡ He aided the building of the Grammar School near Armagh by a donation of 2200l.

He

fervient to the cause of learning, and by his distinguished exertions in framing laws to strengthen and improve the national Establishment : so that, if we examine the annals of our Ecclesiastical history, it may be truly asserted that no Prelate is recorded in them who better understood the true interest of our Church, or advanced it more attentively and effectually. His character will rise in estimation, when his well-judged and ample bequests of a charitable and public nature become generally known. It is proper to mention one of them from this place : his donation of one thousand pounds to assist Incumbents of any pa-

He expended 3000l. on building a Library at Armagh, and on furnishing it with books. He also endowed a Librarianship with 200l. a year.

His expence in building an Observatory near Armagh, and in furnishing it with instruments, &c. was 6000l. ; besides allotting 240l. a year to an Astronomer, 100l. a year to an Assistant, and 30l. a year for books and contingent expences.

rishes

rishes in the diocese of Armagh, or in the province of Ulster, who shall propose to build houses on their glebe-lands. Security must be given to the Trustees of the Firstfruits, in whom the legacy is vested, that the sum of two hundred pounds, which they are empowered to advance, shall be repaid, without interest, on the decease of such Incumbents, or on their removal to another benefice.

Those who would avail themselves of this bequest will oblige me by an early communication of their wish.

But I proceed to the immediate subject of this address; in the selection of which I was thus determined. The learned and laborious Archbishop Secker, in the last of those most instructive Charges which he delivered to his Clergy, enlarged on the duty of preaching in a manner so peculiarly useful and excellent, as to give that discourse a decided

cided superiority over the many productions of our ablest Divines on the same subject. He there suggests that it was his purpose, after having spoken on those stated instructions, to give them his sentiments on occasional ones ; which he calls “ a very important and much neglected part of the pastoral care.” He considered this clerical office as of such great consequence, that he not only proposed to explain the nature of it, if another opportunity of meeting his Clergy had occurred, but, thinking that event improbable on account of his advanced years and declining health, he declared his intention of “ committing his thoughts on it to writing, “ that he might leave behind him some admonitions concerning it.” He therefore contented himself at that time with “ instructing those who had the care of souls “ to consider very seriously what numbers “ there were in most parishes, and therefore perhaps in their’s, whom they could “ not think to be in a state of salvation : “ and

“ and how greatly it imported them to use,
 “ as they solemnly promised at their Or-
 “ dination, not only public but private
 “ monitions, as need should require, and
 “ occasion should be given.”

What the occupations and infirmities of that most eminent Prelate did not permit him to undertake, I shall now endeavour to supply : trusting that the fitness of the subject will recommend it to your serious attention, notwithstanding so very inferior a manner of treating it.

The great qualification for the duty of imparting private and familiar instruction at all fit seasons, and of teaching, like St. Paul, both * “ publicly and from house to house,” is a lively sense of your clerical obligations, and an earnest desire to promote the spiritual welfare of those that are committed

* Acts xx. 20.

committed to your care : for though all Clergymen should make themselves as extensively useful as they can, you will observe that I address you throughout as restraining yourselves to your proper object, the personal superintendence of your own Parishioners. Moderate abilities, and a moderate cultivation of them, will enable a man to bring forth the truly valuable treasures of “an honest and good heart.” But though the office which I am recommending is by no means confined to eminent endowments, and uncommon literary attainments, yet all of us must diligently qualify ourselves for this and every duty, according to our opportunities and capacities : and, particularly, we must investigate and study human nature in our own breasts, in the conduct of others, in the best religious and moral writers, and, above all, in the holy scriptures ; where not only the divine dispensations, but the inmost recesses of the human heart, are laid open to every observing eye. It is imposing no arduous task

task on every Parish-minister, to require that he assiduously remark what vices prevail among his Parishioners ; to what seductions they are most obnoxious from their dispositions or manner of life ; what Christian duties they are prone to neglect ; what customs, dangerous to their morals, are insinuating themselves ; what “ erroneous and strange doctrines ” weak or designing men propagate among them.

In every part of the ministerial function, and especially in that which is now recommended, discretion must preside. We shall always be favourably heard, if, in the first place, our character creates us respect, and if, in the next place, our manner is guided by prudence. Begin the good work ; diligently qualify yourselves for performing it ; resort occasionally to the counsel of your wisest friends ; implore the divine blessing on your honest endeavours : and perseverance and habit

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will make the exercise of this most useful duty easy, natural, and delightful.

But still many may be deterred from engaging in this employment, on account of the difuse into which, among those of our own Church, it has most unhappily fallen ; and of the discouragements which at first present themselves to those who would most willingly revive it. I shall therefore remind you how aptly it arises from the very course of duty which your profession constantly requires. If we reflect an instant, we shall find that our Church enjoins the performance of many occasional services which afford very pertinent opportunities for religious discourse.

The rubric prefixed to the office of public baptism directs that you shew your Parishioners the expediency of “ adminif-
 “ tering that rite on Sundays, and other
 “ Holydays, when the greatest number of
 “ people come together : as well that the
 “ con-

“ congregation may testify the receiving
 “ of those who are baptized into the
 “ Church of Christ, as that, in the baptism
 “ of infants, every man present may be
 “ put in remembrance of his own pro-
 “ fession made to God in his baptism.”
 You are also required, in the rubric be-
 fore the ministration of private baptism,
 “ to warn your people,” no doubt for
 the weighty reasons just mentioned, “ that,
 “ without great cause and necessity, they
 “ procure not their children to be bap-
 “ tized in their own houses.”

The laws of the Church, and of your
 Country, thus authorizing you to open
 and explain these subjects, as you may
 fitly premise, you may well proceed to
 other lessons of instruction connected with
 them : such as the true nature of that
 covenant into which we enter by baptism ;
 and the glorious promises which God will
 certainly fulfil on his part, if we conform
 ourselves to the righteous institutions of
 the

the gospel. You may take occasion also to strengthen the attachment of your people to the Church of Ireland, by assigning the wise reasons on which her ordinances with respect to baptism are founded. She does not admit parents as sponsors at the font, because nature induces them to train up their children in the right way : and she therefore provides an additional security for such an important benefit as a religious education. She uses the sign of the cross at baptism, for the reason * beautifully expressed in the baptismal service ; and which is so familiar to you that I need not repeat it. But, that superstition may not be imputed to us, let me remind you of a passage in the thirtieth canon of our sister-church. “ The church
“ of

* “ We sign him with the sign of the cross, in token
“ that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess
“ the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight
“ under his banner against sin, the world, and the
“ devil, and to continue Christ’s faithful soldier and
“ servant unto his life’s end.”

“ of England, since the abolishing of po-
 “ pery, hath ever held and taught, and
 “ so doth hold and teach still, that the
 “ sign of the cross used in baptism is no
 “ part of the substance of that sacrament.
 “ For when the Minister, dipping the in-
 “ fant in water, or laying water upon the
 “ face of it, as the manner also is, hath
 “ pronounced the appointed form, the in-
 “ fant is fully and perfectly baptized.
 “ So that the sign of the cross, being
 “ afterwards used, doth neither add any
 “ thing to the virtue and perfection of
 “ baptism, nor, being omitted, doth de-
 “ tract any thing from the effect and
 “ substance of it. It is apparent that the
 “ infant baptized is, by virtue of baptism,
 “ before it is signed with the sign of the
 “ cross, received into the congregation of
 “ Christ’s flock, as a perfect member
 “ thereof, and not by any power ascribed
 “ to the sign of the cross, ——— which is
 “ accounted a lawful outward ceremony,
 “ and honourable badge, whereby the
 “ infant

“ infant is dedicated to the service of him
 “ that died upon the cross.”

For such topics the office of baptism affords a fit introduction in private discourse.

The next call on the Clergy to visit families, and to introduce religious conversation, is, when children arrive at a competent age to receive instruction in the Church-catechism. The rubric makes it incumbent on you, not only, “ diligently “ to instruct and examine children openly “ in the church,” so that their understandings may be exercised as well as their memories, but to exhort parents and masters, regularly to send their servants and apprentices, as well as their children, at the times appointed. On such occasions, the great advantages of early religious instruction may be insisted on ; and the happiness which would arise to individuals, and to the community, if parents and

and ministers affectionately assisted each other in so beneficial a work. At these seasons, poorer families may be furnished with some good * exposition of our catechism ; and both the domestic use and the distribution of such and of similar tracts may be recommended to the rich. There is scope also for praise and discreet reward, or for mild advice and admonition, according to the attendance or absence of children, or to the marks of domestic care or neglect which they discover.

The rite of Confirmation follows catechetical instruction. Here another very apt season presents itself for useful intercourse between Ministers and their Parishioners. The great antiquity of this institution will be pressed on parents ; its

* There is none more clear and useful than that by the late truly amiable and excellent Doctor Mann, Bishop of Cork ; who condescended to explain the rudiments of Christianity, though his eminent qualifications for illustrating its highest doctrines were universally acknowledged.

distance

distance from * superstition, as our Church directs it to be administered; its true nature, as being no sacrament, but an appendage to the sacrament of baptism; and, above all, its very strong tendency to suggest good resolutions, and to kindle piety, in the minds of youth. You will remark also that its efficacy is defeated, if we admit any to it before their reason is sufficiently advanced to understand the nature of the vow which they then publicly “ratify with their own mouth and consent;” and you will seek

* The imposition of hands has been thought exceptionable. It is an expressive designation of the person on whom the divine protection is implored. Our Lord himself “put his hands on little children and blessed them.” Mark x. 16. It is observable that the Church of Rome omits the putting on of hands in her celebration of this rite. Calvin has a curious note on Confirmation, in his comment on the epistle to the Hebrews, c. vi. 2: part of which is, “This passage alone abundantly testifies that the origin of this ceremony flowed from the Apostles.—At this day, the pure institution should be retained, and the superstition should be corrected.”

occasion

occasion of familiarly explaining to children the covenant entered into at baptism, and the expediency of acknowledging before the Church their obligations to a suitable belief and practice; addressing yourselves to them not only apart, but at times when others are present who can fitly partake of your instruction.

Confirmation should soon be succeeded by commemorating the death of Christ at his holy Table. And would any discreet and exemplary Clergyman be considered as an intruder, that offered his assistance in qualifying his young Parishioners for a worthy participation of this solemn rite, both by personal instruction and by the recommendation of proper books? In smaller parishes, it is very practicable that none should be admitted to the Lord's Supper but those with whom the Minister has conferred: and some of the wisest and best men have proposed this as an excellent method to communicate an early knowledge

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and a lively sense of Christian doctrines and duties.

Ministers are frequently called on to visit the sick; and they should frequently offer their voluntary attendance. At that awful season, when men are dead to the world and alive to religious impressions, what ample scope has the good Clergyman for all his powers of edification, exhortation, and comfort! The pious and able compilers of our liturgy require that the duties of earnest repentance, of universal love, of sincere forgiveness, of full restitution where the nature of the injury admits of it, and of liberality to the poor in cases of affluence, should be urged home on the awakened conscience: and that, if the mind is troubled with any weighty matter, it should be opened to the Minister of God's word; to the end that counsel or comfort may be given, or assurance of the divine pardon may be pronounced, when it is humbly and heartily desired. The forty first canon allows

allows “ the Minister, if he be a licenced
 “ Preacher, to instruct and comfort the sick,
 “ not only according to the order of the
 “ Communion-book, but as he shall think
 “ most needful and convenient.” For this
 purpose, as Bishop Stearne advises in his
 very useful * treatise on the Visitation of
 the sick, let him prepare an enumeration of
 those sins against which God’s judgements
 are denounced in the scriptures ; and let
 him compose, or collect, prayers and ad-
 dresses adapted to all circumstances. Let
 him exhort those over whom he presides,
 to require his attendance early in their
 sickness ; that their unexhausted strength
 may better enable them to receive spiritual
 advantage. Let him desire relations, or
 attendants, to read, by the sick-bed, such
 prayers, psalms, or other portions of scrip-
 ture, as he shall think most apposite and
 profitable. If the sick person, notwith-
 standing stated opportunities, has not be-
 fore partaken of the holy Eucharist, or has

* Duodecimo. London, 1768.

very

very frequently neglected that great Christian duty ; let him be desired to exhort others against the guilt of such gross omission. Prompt him also to caution his relations and friends against such vices as then burthen his conscience, and cause painful remorse and compunction. The words of a sick man, and especially of a dying man, make a deep impression on all that hear them ; and are seldom erased from the minds of such as are united with them by the ties of blood or friendship. But, to increase this good effect, let the advice of exhorting others be given to the sick man apart from witnesses ; that his admonitions may come recommended by the appearance of being his own act. Bishop Burnet further suggests, in the ninth chapter of his Pastoral Care, the great usefulness of which led him to esteem it as his capital work, that the Clergy should have “ the subjects
 “ of death and judgement rightly laid in
 “ their memory, so as to be able to speak
 “ of them sensibly, fully, and easily, upon
 “ all

“ all occasions ; that so, when they visit
 “ the sick, and, as is common, the neigh-
 “ bours come in, they may be able to make
 “ a grave exhortation, in weighty and fit
 “ words, upon those heads.” Such is the
 advice of a very wise, experienced, and
 serious man : and I am persuaded that a
 Parish-Minister cannot more effectually re-
 commend himself to all, than by attention,
 earnestness, and affection on those solemn
 occasions ; and that nothing will more con-
 ciliate to him the esteem, and favourable
 hearing, of the rich, than the labours, and
 becoming liberality, bestowed by him on
 the poor in discharging this part of his pa-
 rochial office.

But the attendance of a faithful Pastor
 does not terminate with the disease. Those
 who recover from sickness should be exhort-
 ed to shew the warmest gratitude, in word
 and deed, to the Lord of life and death for
 protracting their time of probation ; to re-
 collect their vows made in sickness ; to look
 back

back on that impartial estimate of human affairs which the fullest conviction then compelled them to form; to consider their sickness as a gracious admonition from above, that “man cometh up, and is cut down, as “a flower;” to reflect with what a detestation and abhorrence of their former sins they were then impressed, and in what magnitude and deformity they then appeared; to remember what consolation, hope, and joy beamed on their mind, if a few good actions, however imperfect, presented themselves to their thoughts; to confirm their holy resolutions by the means which religion prescribes; and to suppose that our Lord addresses to every man in such circumstances this affectionate admonition, * “Behold, “thou art restored; sin no more, lest a “worse thing come unto thee.”

Bishop Stearne gives this excellent advice to Parish-Ministers; † “not to leave the sick

* John v. 14.

† De Visitatione infirmorum, p. 71.

“ without

“ without obtaining permission from them
 “ to recal their holy engagements to their
 “ memory, if ever they perceive them re-
 “ lapsing into those vices which they then
 “ determined to abandon. For,” as he well
 observes, “ when this permission is obtained,
 “ the Clergy can use brotherly correction
 “ without offence, when it becomes neces-
 “ sary ; and, by a seasonable interposition
 “ of that kind, may reclaim a sinner from
 “ the error of his way : since there is no
 “ more forcible or acceptable admonition,
 “ than what is amicably introduced by
 “ the previous mention of a former per-
 “ mission.”

Besides visiting the sick, another natural
 introduction to Clergymen, intent on con-
 veying private instruction, is any great tem-
 poral calamity ; and especially the decease of
 relations and friends. The voluntary act of
 humane attendance on survivors, in families
 where a disease has proved fatal, should al-
 ways be added to that performance of duty
 which

which the rules of our Church exact. Such events soften the mind ; and dispose it to serious discourse, and to acts of devotion. Readily embracing these opportunities, the good Minister of Christ will prepare himself to heal the wounds of grief by the best topics of Christian consolation. He will also select, or write, prayers adapted to ordinary occurrences of this nature : that, when a fit season presents itself, he may lead the devotions of a distressed individual or family ; reminding such of St. James's precept, * “ Is any among you afflicted ? Let him “ pray.”

Such are the opportunities of privately instructing the people committed to your charge, which arise from the ordinary course of your duty according to the prescribed forms of our Church. But still other occasions must be sought ; and those which accidentally offer themselves must be improved.

* C. v. 13.

Men should be distributed into their different classes; and proper heads of discourse, and of advice, should be digested in the mind.

The hardened and abandoned must be alarmed by the terrors of the Lord; the careless and supine must be awakened and animated; the feeble-minded and desponding must be comforted; the good must be strengthened, and urged on to higher degrees of perfection.

Youth should be cautioned against immoderate love of pleasure, a vicious compliance with the fashions of the world, ruinous extravagance, and an overweening opinion of themselves.

Manhood should be taught the danger of being immersed in objects of worldly prudence; and of never deviating from the paths of gain or of ambition.

The vices incident to old age, such as avarice, selfishness, and moroseness, should also be pointed out with peculiar respect and prudence ; together with the duties which most become advanced years, such as serious reflection, and religious exercises.

The poor should be exhorted to contentment, honesty, industry, sobriety, purity. They should be instructed that daily labour is the station of life which the wise Governour of the world has assigned them ; that, when they are occupied in it, they may enjoy the delightful reflection that they are well-pleasing to Him, because they are performing their duty ; and that, however humble a station has been allotted to them in this life, they may obtain the highest place in heaven ; to which they should constantly raise their minds by fervent devotion to the common Father of all.

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Those of middle rank in life should be led to improve the advantages of their desirable situation; as free from impatience and discontent on the one hand, and from pride and forgetfulness of God on the other.

The virtues which most adorn the rich and powerful, are gratitude toward God, and humility and beneficence toward men. Their example in acts of self-government, in expressing a sense of religion, and especially in a due observance of the Lord's day, would soon produce a visible effect on the bulk of mankind, perhaps beyond the powers of instruction or of coercion. It is their province to support public charities, and to recover embezzled ones. They may also render important service to Christianity by a distribution of bibles, liturgies, and pious tracts; of which societies instituted in this country, as well as in England, furnish ample choice.

I have

I have been requested to distribute among you a * plan for disseminating the holy scriptures, adopted by our “ Association for discountenancing vice, and “ promoting the practice of religion and “ virtue :” an institution powerfully recommended by the vast importance of its end, and by the wisdom and ability of its Conductors.

But to proceed. There are some subjects of such an extensive nature, that they are common to every general description of men : such as loyalty to the King, submission to the laws, the maintenance of public tranquillity and good order, a disposition to forgive, moderation toward those who differ in opinion, the pious education of children, an early

* It is proposed to raise a sum by subscription for the purchase of five thousand of the largest octavo bibles ; which are to be sold at a price proportioned to the circumstances of the Purchaser, not exceeding in any instance half the prime cost.

and

and intimate knowledge of the scriptures, private, domestic, and public prayer.

Nothing is more suitable to the character of a good Clergyman, than composing such differences and animosities as arise within his sphere of action. Accordingly, we promise at our Ordination, to “ maintain and set forward, as much
“ as lieth in us, peace and love among
“ all Christian people, especially among
“ those committed to our charge.”

A Clergyman, by his station in life as well as by the culture of his mind, is usually superior to the greatest part of his congregation, especially in country places: and therefore he can communicate private instruction to such with a more direct plainness and freedom of speech. But throughout his intercourse with these, he should accustom himself to give advice, and lessons of behaviour, with address and delicacy; both because
he

he thus best expresses, and best satisfies, the goodness of his own mind, and because he thus contracts the habit of wisely conducting himself in circumstances of such nicety.

Another class with whom you may habituate yourselves to the right and effectual manner of performing the duty which I now recal to your minds, are those well-disposed and pious families which, I trust, occur in all parishes. These will readily hear "the words of truth and soberness;" and will give you further exercise, and experience, in accommodating to them such grave discourse as a knowledge of their religious and moral state may require.

Those that are indisposed to religion, especially if they are persons of superior rank, it will be difficult to approach at all; much more with direct advice, or even distant insinuations, on those serious subjects

subjects which the ordinary laws of conversation exclude. The true way is, to conciliate respect and affection by exemplary conduct, by well-placed charities, by instituting, promoting, and directing parochial schools of instruction, by the habit of decent condescension and affability to your own inferiors, by a watchful superintendence over every department which properly belongs to a Clergyman, and by a character for study and literature. Literary acquisitions will enable you to direct proper modes of education, and to assist in conducting them: and the best and most engaging books on useful subjects will be thus recommended with weight and authority. Age and experience may execute what youth cannot dare to attempt. A season of affliction, or of sickness, may ensure a patient and willing ear. At all events, the good Clergyman will watch his opportunity; will guide his actions and words with strict discretion; and will uniformly shew

shew that, like St. Paul, he “ * seeks
 “ not his own profit, but the profit of
 “ others, that they may be saved.”

Such are the various descriptions of men, in relation to their moral state; their different stages of life; and their external circumstances, as affected by what are called the goods of fortune. Here too I may well recommend that such general topics as occur to your reflections be digested in order, committed to writing, and occasionally filled up, as your observations on human nature and human life, and the course of your studies, shall suggest.

Besides the rules already mentioned, some special ones remain to be subjoined in a very few words.

Before scorners, and those that obsti-

* 1 Cor. x. 33.

nately

nately shut their ears to the voice of truth, we must generally suppress the zeal which will be apt to kindle within us. We must not expose ourselves to insult, and our admonitions or instructions to contempt. Our blessed Lord, who was wisdom itself, cautions us against some hearers by comparing them to the vilest of brutes, that * turn on their benefactors and rend them.

Another regulation of our religious discourse is, not to be too hasty in answering any deistical objection which we have not duly weighed, and a satisfactory solution of which does not occur at the time. You may mention those that have most ably discussed the difficulty: you may consider and consult at your leisure; and prepare yourselves to make a solid reply, with Christian meekness, if another fit occasion shall be offered.

* Math. vii. 6.

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A further

A further maxim of prudence is, not to incur the imputation of affecting, and displaying, a concern for religion, by discouraging on its doctrines and duties without a wise discrimination of circumstances. The least appearance of religious ostentation is peculiarly disgusting; and therefore it naturally defeats every good purpose.

It must be observed also that “ personal
 “ admonition should be given secretly, and
 “ with expressions of tenderness and re-
 “ spect.” This is Bishop * Burnet’s ad-
 vice; who adds that “ fit times are to be
 “ chosen for it, and that it may often be
 “ the best way to do it by letter: for there
 “ may be many ways fallen upon of repro-
 “ ving the worst of men in so soft a manner,
 “ that, if they are not to be reclaimed, yet
 “ they shall not be irritated or made worse
 “ by it; which is but too often the effect
 “ of an indiscreet reproof.”

* Pastoral care : c. viii. p. 172. London. 1713.

Common discretion further dictates, that intercourse of this nature should never be divulged, or insinuated in the most distant manner.

The habitual practice of this duty will be no less profitable to yourselves than to others. In your discourses from the pulpit, it will gratify the benevolence of your hearts, by supplying you with subjects most adapted to the exigencies of your hearers : in your occasional converse, experience will enable you to solve the conscientious doubts proposed to you with a readiness and clearness far beyond what mere speculation can attain : your voluntary labours, your abundant anxiety for the spiritual improvement of your parishioners, will gain you their respect and affection, and the good will, the good word, and the good offices of every worthy man that observes or knows your conduct. But there is a further consequence, in comparison with which all other
con-

considerations are as * “less than nothing;”
 that those whom St. Peter describes as “tak-
 ing † the oversight of their flock not by
 constraint but willingly, not for base gain
 but of a ready mind, will receive, when
 the Chief Shepherd appeareth, a crown
 of glory that fadeth not away.”

Here I should have closed these imperfect hints, but that I find a passage so apposite to my purpose in another part of Bishop Burnet’s ‡ Pastoral Care, that I cannot but fortify myself by so great an authority, and conclude with leaving his words full on your minds.

“ That all the several branches of a
 “ Clergyman’s duty may be well gone
 “ about, and indeed as the foundation
 “ upon which all the other parts of the
 “ pastoral care may be well managed, he

* Isai. 40. 17.

† 1 Pet. 5. 4.

‡ Page 182.

“ ought

“ ought frequently to visit his whole pa-
 “ rish *from house to house* ; that so he may
 “ know them, and be known by them.
 “ This I know will seem a vast labour ;
 “ especially in towns, where parishes are
 “ large ; but that is no excuse for those in
 “ the country, where they are generally
 “ small : and if they are larger, the going
 “ this round will be longer in doing : yet
 “ an hour a day, twice or thrice in a week,
 “ is no hard duty : and this in the com-
 “ pass of a year will go a great way, even
 “ in a large parish. In these visits, much
 “ time is not to be spent : a short word for
 “ stirring them up to mind their souls, to
 “ make a conscience of their ways, and to
 “ pray earnestly to God, may begin and
 “ almost end it : after one has asked in
 “ what union and peace the neighbourhood
 “ lives, and enquired into their necessities
 “ if they seem very poor ; that so those to
 “ whom that care belongs may be put in
 “ mind to see how they may be relieved.
 “ In

“ In this course of visiting, a Minister will
 “ soon find out if there be any truly good
 “ persons in his parish, after whom he must
 “ look with a more particular regard : since
 “ these are *the excellent ones, in whom all his*
 “ *delight ought to be.* For let their rank be
 “ ever so mean, if they are sincerely reli-
 “ gious, and not hypocritical pretenders,
 “ who are vainly puffed up with some de-
 “ grees of knowledge, and other outward
 “ appearances, he ought to consider them
 “ as the most valuable in the sight of God,
 “ and indeed as the chief part of his care.
 “ ———I know this way of parochial vi-
 “ sitation is so worn out, that perhaps nei-
 “ ther priest nor people will be very
 “ desirous to see it taken up. It will put
 “ the one to labour and trouble, and bring
 “ the other under a closer inspection ;
 “ which bad men will no way desire, nor
 “ perhaps endure. But if this were put
 “ on their Clergy by their Bishops, and if
 “ they explained in a sermon, before they
 “ began

“ began it, the reasons and ends of doing
 “ it ; that would soon remove the preju-
 “ dices which might arise against it. I
 “ confess this is an increase of labour :
 “ but that will seem no hard matter to such
 “ as have a right sense of their Ordination-
 “ vows, of the value of souls, and of the
 “ dignity of their function. If men had
 “ the spirit of their calling in them, and a
 “ due measure of flame and heat in carry-
 “ ing it on, labour in it would rather be
 “ a pleasure than a trouble. In all other
 “ professions, those who follow them labour
 “ in them all the year long, and are hard
 “ at their business every day in the week.
 “ All men that are well-suited in a profes-
 “ sion which is agreeable to their genius
 “ and inclinations, are really the easier,
 “ and the better pleased, the more they
 “ are employed in it. Indeed, there is no
 “ trade or course of life, except our’s, that
 “ does not take up the whole man. And
 “ shall our’s only, that is the noblest of all
 “ others,

“ others, and that has a *certain* subsistence
 “ fixed upon it, and does not live by con-
 “ tingencies and upon hopes, as all others
 “ do, make the labouring in our business
 “ an objection against any part of our du-
 “ ty? Certainly nothing can so much dis-
 “ pose the nation to think on relieving the
 “ necessities of the many small livings,
 “ as seeing the Clergy set about their busi-
 “ ness to purpose. This would, by the
 “ blessing of God, be a most effectual
 “ means of stopping the progress of Athe-
 “ ism, and of the contempt that the Clergy
 “ lies under: it would go a great way to-
 “ wards healing our schism, and would be
 “ the chief step that could possibly be made
 “ towards compleating our Reformation.”

Such is the weighty advice of this incom-
 parable Prelate; equally conspicuous for
 his knowledge, his labours, and his piety.

What

What has been advanced places the great duty of residence in a strong additional light.

But I have detained you much too long. My desire to comprehend, as far as my reflections reached, every part of an extensive, an important, and, I trust, an interesting subject, is the plea which I offer in excuse.

It has been observed that the great
city of London is a three additional

3

How often do you wish to see

Why do we so often find as things go to

the end of the world every part of the earth

is in a state of confusion and I offer



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